



# THE KATHMANDU POST

WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

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## TODAY

### NATIONAL

The district hospital in Sankhuwasabha is overwhelmed by a surge in dengue, scrub typhus, diarrhoea, and flu cases, leading to patients being treated on the floor due to insufficient beds. **Pg 2**

### OPINION

Most Nepali Dalit activists, guided by their upper-caste leaders, believe that proportional representation and modern laws alone can end caste discrimination, while ignoring the role of entrenched casteist traditions, writes *Mitra Pariyar*. **Pg 4**

### MONEY

Apple farmers in southern part of Gorkha district have a bumper apple harvest, but monsoon-damaged roads are blocking transport and preventing them from getting a good price for their crop. **Pg 5**

### WORLD

If China's claims on Taiwan are about territorial integrity, then it should also take back land from Russia signed over by the last Chinese dynasty in the 19th century, Taiwan president has said. **Pg 6**

### SPORTS



Asmita Khawas scored a hat-trick as Bagmati started their ANFA Women's League with a 5-1 rout of Sudurpaschim at the ANFA Complex on Monday. Sahara Limbu and Aarati Bhujel were also on target for Bagmati. **Pg 7**

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Tenants of the Amarnarayan Temple Trust land protest at the Land Revenue Office in Tansen, Palpa, on Monday after their rent increased tenfold since last year. About 1,500 residents live on the land of the trust, established by Kaji Amar Singh Thapa in 1863 BS (circa 1805 AD).

POST PHOTO: MADHAV ARYAL

## Kathmandu's rapper mayor Balendra Shah battles PM Oli over inaction

Experts link Shah's outsider status and unconventional approach to rising tensions with political elites.

By **PURUSHOTTAM POUDEL**  
KATHMANDU, SEPT 2

Kathmandu Mayor Balendra Shah, known for his maverick style, has once again taken aim at Prime Minister and CPN-UML Chairman KP Sharma Oli. Shah has accused Oli of failing to act on repeated calls of the metropolitan city to take action against Rekha Sharma, a CPN-UML provincial assembly member in Lumbini who is accused of abusing a child domestic worker for eight years.

Back-and-forth between Oli and Shah, a popular rapper, is nothing new. Prior to this, on June 3, Shah had accused Oli of 'policy corruption' related to the illegal land swap involving Giri Bandhu Tea Estate in Jhapa.

This followed the intervention by then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport Raghuraj Mahaseth to halt the mayor's plan to widen pavements in the Capital's New Road area.

On Sunday, writing on social media, Mayor Shah accused Oli of failing to act against Sharma despite repeated calls by the metropolis office for the past two months.

"The court has also decided to prosecute the accused," Shah wrote on Facebook on Sunday. "Respected prime minister, good governance entails taking action against your law-maker accused of domestic violence."

"Perhaps to you, good governance is limited to announcing a compensation

of Rs100,000 and shedding crocodile tears over her death on Facebook," Mayor Shah said on his Facebook post, which he shared on X.

But why has KMC Mayor Shah repeatedly targeted Oli?

Political experts suggest that as Shah is not part of the traditional power elite, and those traditional elites are not ready to welcome him, such clashes are to be expected.

Shah earlier criticised Oli and his party for blocking his pavement widening plan.

"Mayor Shah has taken an unconventional approach in dealing with the old political elite, which has increased friction between them," Jhalak Subedi, a political analyst, told the Post.

Shah had also targeted Oli and his party colleagues earlier when they intervened in the mayor's plan to widen the pavement in the New Road area. This time, as the UML is obstructing Shah's efforts to implement the Supreme Court ruling to vacate the Bagmati riverside land, he has again targeted the party and its chief, according to a close aide to the mayor.

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## At least 40 Nepalis fighting for Russia confirmed dead

DNA tests are underway for more than 50 Nepali nationals, so the death toll could spike, say officials.

By **ANIL GIRI**  
KATHMANDU, SEPT 2

At least 40 Nepali nationals have been confirmed dead while fighting for Russia in the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. But Nepali officials warned that the actual death toll could go much higher.

According to the Nepali Embassy in Moscow, DNA tests are underway for more than 50 Nepali nationals believed to have been killed while fighting for Russia. This suggests that the death toll of Nepalis killed in the war could rise significantly.

With the confirmation of four latest deaths of Nepali nationals, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Monday put the total fatalities at 40. The four victims have been identified as Bimal Limbu, Bikram Chaudhary, Dom Bahadur Ale, and Subas Thapa.

Milan Tuladhar, Nepali ambassador to Russia who prematurely completed his term on Sunday and is set to return to Kathmandu soon, told the

Post that the death toll could soar beyond 40 as the final DNA confirmation for as many as 50 suspected deaths of Nepal nationals is still pending.

He was recalled by the incumbent government at a time when six Nepali nationals, who were killed in the Russia-Ukraine war, are in the final stages of receiving compensation.

As per the Russian rules, the signatures of three diplomats serving in the embassy are

required for processing the compensation, which will then be distributed through local units to the next kin of those who died in the war.

However, neither side has disclosed the exact amount that the families will receive after confirmation of a death in the war, but according to multiple sources, the amount could exceed Rs20 million. And each injured person who sustained a single bullet wound in the war will receive three million rubles (or nearly Rs4.5million), and the compensation amount increases with the number of bullet wounds sustained.

After Nepal's constant pressure, Russia has stopped recruiting Nepalis into its army.

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and its announcement in May 2023 to recruit foreign nationals into its army, hundreds of Nepali nationals joined the Russian Army.

But due to constant diplomatic effort and pressure from various levels and sectors, Russia has stopped recruiting Nepali nationals.

"Russia decided to stop hiring Nepali nationals from this May. Recruitment has halted," said Tuladhar over the phone from Moscow.

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## Rare strike over hostage deaths paralyses Israel

Protesters are demanding that Netanyahu secure a deal to return the remaining around 100 hostages held in Gaza.



AP/RSS

Demonstrators demand a cease-fire deal and the release of hostages held by Hamas in the Gaza Strip after the deaths of six hostages in the Palestinian territory, in Tel Aviv, on Monday.

By **TIA GOLDENBERG**/  
ASSOCIATED PRESS  
TEL AVIV, ISRAEL, SEPT 2

A rare call for a general strike in Israel to protest the failure to return hostages held in Gaza led to closures and other disruptions around the

country on Monday, including at its main international airport, while US President Joe Biden added to the pressure by saying Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu isn't doing enough to reach a deal for a cease-fire and hostage release.

The strike was ignored in some

areas, reflecting deep political divisions in Israel over a cease-fire deal after nearly 11 months of fighting.

Hundreds of thousands of Israelis poured into the streets late Sunday in grief and anger after six hostages were found dead in Gaza. The families and much of the public blamed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, saying they could have been returned alive in a deal with Hamas to end the nearly 11-month-old war.

But others support Netanyahu's strategy of maintaining military pressure on Hamas, whose Oct. 7 attack into Israel triggered the war. They say it will force the militants to give in to Israeli demands, potentially facilitate rescue operations and ultimately annihilate the group.

Biden spoke to reporters as he arrived at the White House for a Situation Room meeting with advisors involved in negotiating a deal. Asked if Netanyahu was doing enough, Biden responded, "No."

He insisted that negotiators remain "very close" to a deal, adding, "Hope springs eternal."

Hamas has accused Israel of dragging out months of negotiations over a cease-fire by issuing new demands, including for lasting Israeli control over two strategic corridors in Gaza.

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DISTRICT DIGEST

One dies of dengue infection in Chitwan



**CHITWAN:** A 63-year-old man from Bharatpur Metropolitan City’s ward 2 died of dengue infection while undergoing treatment at Chitwan Medical College Teaching Hospital on Saturday. This is the first dengue-related death in Chitwan this fiscal year, according to Dinesh Rupakheti, chief of the Chitwan District Public Health Office. Dengue cases have been steadily rising in the district. The district has reported 551 cases since mid-July. The health office said Ichchhakamana Rural Municipality, a hilly area, has reported the highest number of cases, with 283 infections, followed by Bharatpur Metropolitan City, with 158 cases. With the risk of dengue spreading further in September and October, the health office has urged residents to remain vigilant.

Eight arrested on charge of printing counterfeit notes

**SARLAHI:** Police arrested eight individuals, including two Indian nationals, from Madhuwani near the Nepal-India border for their alleged involvement in printing counterfeit currency notes. The Indian nationals, identified as 49-year-old Rajiv Thakur and 40-year-old Subodh Kumar from Bihar, were among those apprehended. The other suspects include 25-year-old Saugat Thapa Magar of Chandragiri Municipality in Kathmandu, 47-year-old Bijay Lama from Kageshwari Manohara Municipality-6 in Kathmandu, 32-year-old Janardhan Singh of Sarlahi, and 37-year-old Vishal Rai of Rautahat. Additionally, 33-year-old Sanjay Rana Magar from Lalitpur Metropolitan City-1 and 37-year-old Amir Khatri from Changunarayan Municipality-5 in Bhaktapur were also taken into custody, according to Deputy Superintendent of Police Deepak Shrestha of the District Police Office, Sarlahi. The arrests followed a tip-off about counterfeit notes being produced in a house in Madhuwani village. During the operation, police seized 14 bundles of paper cut to the size of one-thousand-rupee notes, eight litres of various coloured chemicals, a total of 95,805 Nepali rupees, ten mobile phones, two vehicles with Indian number plates, and a jeep with a Nepali number plate, DSP Shrestha said.

Human skeleton found in deserted house

**PYUTHAN:** A human skeleton has been found in a deserted house of Mandabi Rural Municipality-2, Pyuthan. According to Prakash Oli, chairman of Mandabi-2, the human skeleton was recovered on the first floor of the house belonging to Dal Bahadur Khatri on Sunday. The locals, who went to the area to chase away monkeys, took shelter in the house after it rained. The house has been empty over the past seven years. Oli said the skeleton could be of a girl of around 11-12 years. Detailed investigation is underway into the incident, said police.

Sankhuwasabha District Hospital overwhelmed

The 50-bed hospital is overcrowded with the patients mostly having symptoms of fever and diarrhoea.

DIPENDRA SHAKYA  
SANKHUWASABHA, SEPT 2

The district hospital in Sankhuwasabha, a mountain district in Koshi Province, is overwhelmed with patients, forcing the hospital authority to keep patients on the floor and passage due to a lack of enough beds.

Of late, patients suffering from dengue, scrub typhus, diarrhoea and seasonal flu are on the rise at the hospital. The health institution fails to manage beds for the serious patients who need to be admitted in the hospital.

Bhakta Bahadur Dahal of Chainpur Municipality-11 took his nine-year-old grandson Roman Dahal to the district hospital last week as he suffered from fever and diarrhoea. The doctor involved in his treatment advised to keep Roman under doctor’s monitoring. So he was admitted to the district hospital.

But Roman could not find a hospital bed. A bed was improvised by joining two benches. “He is lucky to find benches,” Bhakta Bahadur said. The boy was discharged following treatment on Sunday.

The 50-bed hospital is overcrowded with the patients mostly having similar symptoms of fever and diarrhoea. The hospital has no alternative to arrange temporary beds on the passage and floor.

People from Sankhuwasabha and northern part of neighbouring Bhojpur district visit the hospital for treatment. As per the data available at the hospital, around 300 patients visit the Out Patient Department (OPD) daily and 60 others seek treatment in the emergency unit.

“The patients’ flow has increased over the past two weeks,” said Dr Pranam Jayaru, chief at the Sankhuwasabha district hospital. “We started making temporary beds by using benches with the increasing number of patients lately. Around 15 such temporary beds have been prepared to provide treatment to the



The hospital authority has been forced to keep patients on the floor and passage due to a lack of enough beds.

patients.”

The patients and their attendants have been facing difficulties and hardships due to overflow of the patients. They have to walk through the crowded passage and hospital floor.

“The hospital is overcrowded with

patients and their attendants,” said Durgesh Paudel, a local of Dharmadevi Municipality. He brought his wife to the hospital a few days ago for delivery. “It’s difficult to walk through the passage as patients are kept on the benches. There may be chances of

infection to the patients as well due to the crowd.”

The hospital does not have space to manage the increasing number of patients. Three of its buildings are under construction. As per the project agreement, the construction of the

POST PHOTO

Most Nepalis in Russian army may return home by October, says outgoing Nepali envoy

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He said that the compensation for six Nepali nationals who were killed in the early days of war and whose documentation has been completed, is in the final stages of processing. “I don’t know what will happen after I leave Moscow,” he said. According to him, it would take at least two months for a new ambassador to take office. The current government has nominated Jangam Chauhan as the next ambassador to Russia, and his parliamentary hearing has yet to be completed.

“Every day, we are getting new information about missing Nepalis, but it is expected that by October, all Nepali nationals serving in the Russian Army who want to return will be back in Nepal. But a sizeable number of Nepali nationals have obtained Russian citizenship and passports and they may not return,” he said. “Some of these Russian pass-

port holder Nepalis, who joined the Russian Army, are hoping to sneak into Europe. Many of them are injured in combat and are unfit to fight.”

The injured people with bullet wounds have obtained Russian passports and millions of rubles, so they don’t want to return, he said.

“We met several such Nepalis and tried to convince them to return home, but they were not persuaded,” he said.

A senior foreign ministry official said that Russia has been reluctant to share details about Nepali nationals it had recruited into its army, including the number of recruits, deaths, injuries and contract terminations, among other issues.

So far, 174 Nepali nationals have returned home, as per official records. In a recent interview with Kantipur, a sister publication of the Post, Foreign Minister Arzu Rana had said that Nepal government has consistently

raised concerns with Russia regarding the recruitment of Nepali nationals into Russian Army, their numbers and status, compensation for families of those killed in the war, and the repatriation of bodies, among other things. Several families have performed the funeral rites for their loved ones without receiving the bodies.

“During my recent conversation with the Russian Ambassador, we again raised our concerns,” said the minister in her interview.

“The Russian side keeps saying that since the war is ongoing, the issues of recruitment and logistics are handled by the Russian defense ministry, not the foreign ministry.”

Two former foreign ministers Narayan Kaji Shrestha and NP Saud had also discussed these concerns in detail with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Vershinin.

Kathmandu mayor blasts PM for ignoring court to shield party member



POST FILE PHOTO

KMC issued a notice on August 8 to clear the settlements along Bagmati and its tributaries.

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Following the Supreme Court’s ruling—whose full text was issued on July 15—ordering authorities to clear settlements along the Bagmati River and its tributaries in the Kathmandu Valley, KMC issued a notice on August 8 to clear the settlements. The KMC notice also bans new construction within an additional 20 metres beyond the previously designated riverbank area.

In the full text of the ruling, the Supreme Court also deemed the government’s standard of leaving 20 metres clear on riverbanks to be insufficient and has ordered an additional 20 metres be added.

The Supreme Court ruling was against the Cabinet decision of October 17, 2008, which had set the 20-metre clearance requirement for riverside areas in Kathmandu. According to the decision, construction was allowed only if a 20-metre buffer was left on both sides of the Bagmati, Bishnumati and Manohora rivers, while the buffer for other riverbanks is between 4-20 metres.

A joint bench of Supreme Court Justice Ananda Mohan Bhattarai and Binod Sharma had issued the order against the earlier cabinet decision. The top court issued a verdict on it on December 19 last year.

Soon after the court’s full text came out, KMC had said that it would fully implement the court’s decision.

According to the KMC notice, the prohibition on construction will now extend to 40 metres on either side of Bagmati, Bishnumati and Manohara rivers.

The notice issued by the metropolis

states, “No construction will be permitted within an additional 20 metres on either side of the river, and ongoing construction will be halted.”

The Kathmandu district committee of the UML protested the municipal notice. On August 26, the committee also met Prime Minister Oli to express its concerns and requested a judicial review of the Supreme Court’s decision to ban construction on an additional 20 metres of land.

“If the KMC notice is implemented, it will not only affect a large section of Kathmandu’s population, but also impact World Heritage sites like the Pashupatinath Temple,” says Rajan Bhattarai, the Bagmati Province in-charge of the UML.

“The municipal decision is not pragmatic and its repercussions are already being felt,” Bhattarai told the Post. “Following the municipal notice, homeowners with bank mortgages are in serious trouble as the banks have started demanding alternative collateral.”

“While we respect the court’s decision, its implementation will lead to severe financial problems for the country,” Bhattarai added.

Subedi, the political analyst, doesn’t agree.

“If the court’s decision is problematic, the government has the option to challenge it,” Subedi said. “This has nothing to do with Mayor Shah.”

The UML district committee is scheduled to meet with Nepali Congress chief Sher Bahadur Deuba on Tuesday to discuss the matter, and also plans to meet Maoist Centre chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal, according to Bhattarai.

Biden slams Netanyahu for not doing enough for a ceasefire

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Thousands attended the funeral Monday for one of the six, Israeli-American Hersh Goldberg-Polin, a 23-year-old native of Berkeley, California. He was one of the best-known hostages, and his parents had led a high-profile campaign for the captives’ release, meeting with Biden, Pope Francis, and addressing the Democratic National Convention last month.

“It feels like he could have been my son,” said Irit Dolev, whose two sons went to school with Goldberg-Polin..

“I’ve buried so many friends this year, but this is the hardest one, because he was alive,” said Amit Levy, who was among hundreds of others at the cemetery.

The general strike, called by Israel’s largest trade union, the Histadrut, ended early after a labor court said it must end by 2:30 pm local time, accepting a petition from the government calling it politically motivated.

The head of the Histadrut, Arnon Bar-David, had called for the general strike, the first since the start of the war. It aimed to shut down or disrupt major sectors of the economy, including banking and health care.

Airlines at Israel’s main international airport, Ben-Gurion, halted outgoing flights between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Those flights either departed early or were slightly delayed. Arriving flights continued as usual, according to the Israel Airports Authority.

“There’s no need to punish the whole state of Israel because of what is happening, overall, it is a victory for Hamas,” said one passenger, Amrani Yigal.

But in Jerusalem, resident Avi Lavi said that “I think this is fair, the time has come to stand and to wake up, to



REUTERS

A Palestinian sits amid the rubble of buildings destroyed after an Israeli strike, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, in Khan Younis, in the Gaza Strip, on Sunday.

do everything for the hostages to come back alive.”

The Histadrut said banks, some large malls and government offices had joined the strike, as well as some public transit services, although there did not appear to be major disruptions.

Municipalities in Israel’s populated central area, including Tel Aviv, participated, leading to shortened school hours. Other municipalities, including Jerusalem, did not participate.

The demonstrations on Sunday appeared to be the largest since the start of the war, with organizers estimating that up to 500,000 people joined nationwide events and the main rally in Tel Aviv. Israeli media estimated

that 200,000 to 400,000 took part.

They are demanding that Netanyahu reach a deal to return the remaining roughly 100 hostages held in Gaza, a third of whom are believed to be dead, even if it means leaving a battered Hamas intact and withdrawing from the territory.

Many Israelis support this position, but others prioritize the destruction of the militant group over freedom for the hostages.

Netanyahu has pledged “total victory” over Hamas and blames it for the failure of the negotiations, which have dragged on for much of this year.

Israel said the six hostages found dead in Gaza were killed by Hamas shortly before Israeli forces arrived in the tunnel where they were held.

Three were reportedly scheduled to be released in the first phase of a ceasefire proposal discussed in July. The Israeli Health Ministry said autopsies had determined the hostages were shot at close range and died on Thursday or Friday.

Netanyahu blamed Hamas, saying “whoever murders hostages doesn’t want a deal.”

Hamas blamed their deaths on Israel and the United States, accusing them of dragging out the talks by issuing new demands, including for lasting Israeli control over two strategic corridors in Gaza. Hamas has offered to release the hostages in return for an end to the war, the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces and the release of a large number of Palestinian prisoners, including high-profile militants.

Some 250 hostages were taken on Oct. 7. More than 100 were freed during a cease-fire in November in exchange for the release of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. Eight have been rescued by Israeli forces. Israeli troops mistakenly killed three Israelis who escaped captivity in December.

Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, when they stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7. Israel’s retaliatory offensive in Gaza has killed over 40,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, who do not say how many were militants.

The war has displaced the vast majority of Gaza’s 2.3 million people, often multiple times, and plunged the besieged territory into a humanitarian catastrophe, including new fears of a polio outbreak.

Associated Press writers Julia Frankel and Melanie Lidman in Jerusalem contributed.





Devotees perform pooja on the occasion of Kuse Aunsi at Gokarneshwar in Kathmandu on Monday. On this day, Hindus offer respects to their fathers dead and alive.

# Prime Minister Oli’s remarks on LGBTQIA+ issue rattles members of the community

Confusing rhetoric about the community perpetuates ignorance and prejudice among the broader population, and trickles down to the daily lives of queer individuals, activists say.

○ AARATI RAY  
KATHMANDU, SEPT 2

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli went viral last week for not knowing things. Asked about how his government would support the LGBTQIA+ community, Oli admitted, “I do not know much about this issue.” This can be considered unusual for a politician who has offered his takes on everything from the domains of Hindu religious epics to linguistics.

“What did he say, something till Q?” Oli said during the National Youth Conclave on August 24. “Yes, LGBTQ. Every individual, whoever they are, should have their rights established. But marriage between the same gender is something I do not understand. What does that mean? I don’t know.” The crowd received Oli’s remarks with loud cheers. The footage of the remarks went viral across social media platforms.

Oli’s admission of ignorance comes at a time when Nepal has earned a reputation globally for being favourable for the LGBTQIA+ community. It is perhaps one of the few subjects that has put Nepal on the global map recently.

“Nepal leads inaugural Rainbow Tourism Conference, pledges safe destination for all,” reports the Hindustan Times. “Why Nepal could be the next big LGBTQ travel destination,” CNN wonders. ILGA Asia celebrates, “Nepal: Marriage Registration for Same-Sex Couples after seminal court ruling.” The BBC: “Nepal registers first same-sex marriage, celebrated as a win for LGBT rights.”

Oli’s admission, made in front of a large audience, makes the international praise ring hollow, say Nepal’s gender activists, casting doubt on how genuinely inclusive the country’s environment is for its queer community.

The comment has also ignited disappointment and disillusionment among those who had hoped the government would be a strong ally in their fight for rights.

“If the policymakers and high-ranking officials like the prime minister do not know the issues, they need to collaborate, they need to invite us to build their capacity in this regard,” says Manisha Dhakal, the execu-

tive director of the Blue Diamond Society (BDS), Nepal’s pioneering queer rights group.

Meanwhile, Laxmi Ghalan, founding president of Mitini Nepal, another queer rights organisation, describes Oli’s response as “unexpected” and indicative of a superficial understanding of the LGBTQIA+ movement in Nepal.

“We believe that the prime minister’s response might weaken our community’s movement and extend the battle for the rights we are seeking,” Ghalan says. “In any civilised society, the issues of minorities are always given priority. However, when the prime minister makes a casual remark like ‘I don’t know much about this,’ even after the constitution has acknowledged this community, it raises concerns that our struggle might continue for a longer time.”

**Oli’s remarks have sparked discontent among members of queer community.**

Even with constitutional recognition, true equality remains elusive if those in power are uninformed or indifferent, says Pinky Gurung, president of the BDS.

“From his response, it seems like he has accepted gender issues,” Gurung says. “But by saying he doesn’t understand the issue of same-sex marriage, he has diplomatically shown positive ignorance. I don’t think he has the liberty to say that he doesn’t understand or have much knowledge on an issue because he is not an ordinary citizen. He is the country’s prime minister!”

Gurung adds that such rhetoric might perpetuate ignorance and prejudice among the broader population, and trickle down to the daily lives of queer individuals.

For instance, Anamika Chhetri, 31, and her 22-year-old sibling, both trans women, have been victims of such rhetoric. Chhetri’s sibling had gender reassignment surgery three years ago, while Chhetri is currently on hormone therapy.

In June, National Assembly member Ranju Jha made contro-

versial remarks about hormone therapy and gender reassignment surgery. “With hormone therapy and gender reassignment surgery—men becoming women and women becoming men...,” Jha said. “I don’t know if I should call it a right or what. We cannot recognise women who have undergone these processes as ‘women.’”

The Yogyakarta Principles, developed in 2006 and endorsed by experts like former Nepal parliament member Sunil Babu Pant, affirm that each person’s self-declared sexual orientation and gender identity are fundamental to their identity, autonomy, dignity, and freedom.

These principles emphasise that legal recognition of gender should not depend on medical procedures. However, if someone chooses medical assistance for their transition, those services should be accessible.

The siblings, who came out in 2022, initially struggled for parental acceptance. With the help of their nurse sister, they managed to persuade their parents. However, Jha’s comments shattered this hard-earned acceptance, leading their parents to view them as “abnormal” again, Chhetri says.

Since Jha’s remarks, Chhetri and her siblings have not been able to visit their parents, and the supportive environment they had found was lost, Chhetri adds.

After Jha’s comments, Chhetri experienced mental and emotional distress, feeling that her life, which was finally improving, had been derailed once more by a remark made by a parliamentarian.

“The PM’s comments have thrown me back into the same turmoil,” Chhetri says. “When powerful figures like the prime minister or parliamentarians make such remarks, it deeply affects us. We constantly struggle to prove our normalcy and existence, and such incidents undermine all our efforts, reducing us to the subject of jokes and memes.”

Meanwhile, Alisha, a bisexual woman from Kathmandu, says that the prime minister’s remarks showed that he was irresponsible to his duties. “The PM’s later remarks about ‘establishing justice’ seemed like an attempt to salvage his earlier statement,”

says Alisha, who the Post is identifying with a pseudonym for privacy reasons. “But how can we trust him to ensure justice when he admits, ‘I am not aware of this issue,’ and adds, ‘I don’t need to know everything?’”

No matter what PM said in the end, Alisha adds, only the earlier sentence regarding his disregarding of the LGBTQIA+ community has been circulating in social media and is being used against them.

The impact of the video has indeed been deep.

Rishi (name changed for privacy), a 28-year-old gay man from Lalitpur, is also bearing the brunt of the prime minister’s remarks, he says.

Since Oli’s controversial remark went viral, Rishi has been bombarded with memes, the video clip, and taunting messages from his relatives and even an old class bully.

Rishi has not left his home for the past five days, struggling with the emotional toll it has taken on him, he says. “The hope I had after hearing about the news of registration of the first same-sex marriage towards the end of 2023 has turned into hopelessness,” Rishi says. “When the prime minister says, ‘I don’t know,’ what can I expect from the government?”

The negative impact of political rhetoric on LGBTQIA+ communities is not confined to Nepal. In the United States, research following the 2016 presidential election highlighted how anti-queer rhetoric during the campaign led to an increase in reported hate crimes against LGBTQIA+ individuals.

The ‘Southern Poverty Law Center’ (SPLC) documented a significant rise in hate incidents following the election, many of which were directly linked to the rhetoric used by political figures.

In countries where politicians have made openly homophobic or transphobic statements, such as Russia or Uganda, there has been a corresponding increase in violence and discrimination against LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Studies have shown that these remarks not only fuel societal prejudice but also embolden law enforcement and judicial systems to act against queer communities.

The fear and anxiety generated by such remarks can lead to psychological distress, as evidenced by the mental health struggles reported by LGBTQIA+ individuals like Rishi and Chhetri in the aftermath of the politically charged rhetoric.

As Gurung points out, Oli’s remarks give the impression that LGBTQIA+ issues are not a priority for the government. “When the prime minister doesn’t know about our struggles, it gives the impression to the general public that when even the government is not willing to learn about LGBTQ+ issues, why would the general public care?” Gurung says.

In response to the viral statement, the Prime Minister’s press secretary, Ram Sharan Bajagain, said that “the prime minister responding with ‘I am not aware much about the issue’ is the admission that there is always more to learn for everyone.” “He will engage in the necessary discourse to understand what he’s currently unfamiliar with,” Bajagain said.

## UML joins Congress-led Gandaki government

Congress agrees to join the UML-led government in Koshi.

○ POST REPORT  
POKHARA, SEPT 2

One and half months after the CPN-UML and the Nepali Congress formed a coalition government at the federal level, leaders from the two parties have reached an agreement with regard to running the Gandaki Province government.

The wrangling between the two parties over power sharing in the provincial government prolonged for over a month as none of the sides showed any flexibility. Eventually, the parties increased the number of ministries from seven to nine to accommodate ministers as per the agreements reached between the two parties.

The Cabinet meeting on Sunday decided to split two ministries: the Ministry of Social Development and Health, and the Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forests, and Environment.

Then the CPN-UML became ready to join the provincial government led by Surendra Raj Pandey of Nepali Congress. Padma GC, Prakash Bahadur KC, Mitralal Basyal and Krishna Pathak became ministers from the UML. GC is leading the Ministry of Agriculture, Land Management and Cooperative; KC heads Physical Infrastructure and Transport; Basyal has got the portfolio of Industry and Tourism; and Pathak has got the Ministry of Health. Chief Minister Pandey’s party Congress is leading five other ministries.

In the meantime, lawmaker Rajeev Gurung, also known as Dipak Manange, who was minister in the Pandey-led Cabinet, resigned from his ministerial post on Monday.

Manange confirmed his resignation saying that he had no interest to lead the Ministry of Forest.

“I sent my resignation to the chief minister. I am a man of action. What can I do in a ministry that has no power at all?” he told the Post. “The Ministry of Forests and Environment in the province holds no real power. Why should I be there to manage crofton weed and mugwort?”

Meanwhile, the two parties that were at a loggerhead over sharing ministerial portfolios in Koshi government, which is led by Hikmat Karki of CPN-UML, have reached an understanding on power sharing.

As per the understanding, the UML will have a chief minister, four ministers and two ministers of state while the Congress will get four ministers and two ministers of state in the provincial government, according to a senior Congress leader.

Also, the Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba has succeeded in allocating ministerial seats among various factions within his party in the province.

According to the leader, in Koshi, two ministers will be from among those loyal to Deuba, and one each from the factions led by Shekhar Koirala and Krishna Prasad Sitaula. Koirala and Sitaula factions will get a minister of state each.



Newly appointed Gandaki provincial ministers take the oath of office and secrecy on Monday.

## Finance ministry approves Rs600 million loan to Dairy Development Corporation

Loan aimed at settling farmers’ outstanding payments.

○ POST REPORT  
KATHMANDU, SEPT 2

The Ministry of Finance has given approval to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development to submit a proposal to the Council of Ministers for providing Rs600 million loan to the Dairy Development Corporation.

The secretariat of Finance Minister Bishnu Prasad Paudel said the corporation can use this amount to pay farmers their outstanding dues.

As much as Rs10 million was initially allocated to the DDC as a loan for the current fiscal year. The finance ministry has given the go-ahead to the agriculture ministry to transfer an additional Rs590 million from the ministry’s annual budget, bringing the total loan to Rs600 million.

The proposal will be submitted to the

Council of Ministers for approval and the government will proceed with the loan once it is endorsed by the Cabinet.

The secretariat said Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Paudel, Agriculture Minister Ram Nath Adhikari, and officials from the Corporation have discussed the issue regarding the settlement of the outstanding dues. Farmers have been protesting for long, demanding the DDC clear their outstanding dues.

Earlier in May the agitating farmers had submitted a memorandum to the then Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Development Jwala Kumari Sah demanding that the government clear the outstanding payments of dairy farmers immediately.

At the time, they said the state-owned DDC owes Rs1.83 of dairy farmers as of mid-May, with the total debt, including private dairies, amounting to around Rs6 billion.



Nepali film star Rajesh Hamal (left) and Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli during the National Youth Conclave on August 24.



OPINION



Cruel reminders

The stray explosions show that a country can never fully recover from a bloody civil war.

President Ramchandra Paudel’s approval on August 29, 2024, of the bill to amend the Enforced Disappearances Enquiry, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act was widely welcomed. Political leaders in particular expressed great pride in their part in concluding an important chapter in Nepal’s peace process. The same day, however, a grenade exploded in Phaelelung Rural Municipality-5 of Panchthar district, claiming the lives of two children and leaving one injured. It was later discovered that the grenade was a remnant of the Maoist war (1996-2006). It was a clear reminder that passage of the transitional law alone is not enough to put the violent past to rest.

The guns in a decade-long war fell silent with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord in 2006, which stated that “both sides [the Government of Nepal and Maoists] shall assist each other to mark landmines and booby-traps used during the time of armed conflict by providing necessary information within 30 days and defuse and excavate them within 60 days.” Yet, nearly two decades later, the randomly left weapons from the conflict period continue to endanger people. The Panchthar case is one of several examples. In its recent editorial, *Kantipur*, the *Post*’s sister publication, highlighted six such incidents of explosions following the CPA’s signing. To take just two examples, in the explosion on April 30, 2020, two children had perished, while on October 29, 2022, four children had died.

The Maoist insurgency had a multifaceted impact on people’s lives. Many civilians who suffered injuries, who were displaced and who lost their loved ones still await justice. Many of them are obliged to live in poverty, and they still struggle with the war’s trauma. The Act, amended to heed their concerns, will go some way towards bringing them a sense of closure. Yet even the amended Act has loopholes. Even though the new bill addresses incidents of post-war explosions and promises relief to the victims, it is silent on locating and destroying all the remaining explosives from the conflict period. Such random explosions and death of civilians will also puncture the picture of Nepal’s successful peace process that the country rightly takes great pride in.

It is time for the government to carry out its legal obligations, honour the promises made in the CPA, and ensure that there is no more risk to public life from stray bombs and booby traps. To start with, there must be comprehensive mapping of all the war-time weapons, and the ex-Maoist leaders as well as the security forces should join hands to solve this lingering problem. Also, on a more philosophical note, even if the peace process is successfully concluded, the stray bombs are also a reminder that you can never fully recover from a bloody civil war. This is all the more reason to try to eschew violent means to get to political ends. Yes, Nepal is still beset with a legion of problems but violence, in the long run, only makes them worse.

THEIR VIEW

Waterborne diseases

Much needs to be improved given the lack of clean water after any major flood.

We are worried about the outbreak of waterborne diseases, particularly diarrhoea, in the flood-hit communities. The situation is said to be especially alarming in the worst-hit areas like Feni, Noakhali, and surrounding districts, where floodwaters are receding much slower than expected, thus increasing the risks of diseases. Although the authorities have correctly identified the crisis of safe drinking water as a key problem, measures taken so far are proving to be inadequate. This underscores the need for further expanding ongoing efforts to both address the crisis of safe water and treat diseases emanating from the lack thereof.

A major challenge at the moment is the struggle of hospitals and health complexes that remain ill-equipped to handle the influx of patients. For example, Feni’s Sonagazi Upazila Health Complex has 50 beds but is having to treat nearly double its capacity, with patients reported to be lying on the floors, staircases, and balconies. The Chhagalnaiya Upazila Health Complex, which has the same number of beds, had 126 patients on Saturday. The Feni General Hospital’s diarrhoea ward, which has 18 beds, was accommodating eight times its capacity. Similarly, at the Noakhali General Hospital, a diarrhoea ward meant for 16 patients was treating 280. The two districts together contributed at least 32 in the overall flood death toll of 59.

The overflowing of patients has been ascribed to the submersion of tubewells during the flood—which contaminated the water source and caused waterborne diseases to spread—but also to the flooding of many community clinics, upazila health complexes, and even district hospitals, which multiplied the pressure on the remaining facilities. The result is that thousands have been left without access to basic medical care at a time when it was most needed. The government has tried to respond to the crisis by deploying 619 medical teams across the 11 flood-hit districts. But considering the scale of the disaster, there is clearly a need to increase the number of such teams, and ensure that they reach remote and worst-hit areas, as patients cannot be expected to travel long distances because of the communication disruptions caused by the flood.

Going forward, the government also must restore and strengthen the health infrastructure in affected regions. Reopening all community clinics, which are often the only source of healthcare for rural populations, is particularly important, as is ensuring the availability of safe water. The current crisis has once again laid bare the pitfalls of our disaster management systems. Bangladesh is no stranger to such calamities, yet the recurring issues of overwhelmed health facilities and lack of clean water after any major flood suggest that much needs to be improved. It is crucial to invest in building a more resilient health system that can respond effectively to such emergencies.

— The Daily Star (Bangladesh)/ANN

Dalits must stop believing their political masters and focus more on religious and spiritual causes.

MITRA PARIYAR



We are just back from a trip to Beni in Myagdi district, where the dead body of a 19-year-old pregnant Dalit teenager brutally knifed by her former upper-caste lover eerily awaits justice. The locals discovered the crime in a nearby forest several months after the gruesome murder. The Myagdi police have recently arrested the suspects and are collecting evidence to present to the court. The victim’s parents are too poor and unable to speak out, but some local Dalits have been pressurising the district administration to deliver justice through street demonstrations and lobbying.

As Myagdi’s Chief District Officer and Police officials tried to reassure us during our meeting, the legal process seems to be progressing smoothly. Unlike in most cases of violence against Dalits, political parties haven’t interfered with the legal process on behalf of the murderer. Yet the agitating Dalits aren’t entirely convinced of a positive outcome. They will continue to monitor the case closely, and our activist organisation, the Caste Watch Network (CWN), will do the same from our end in Kathmandu.

The persistent interference of corrupt and immoral politicians has worsened a poorly resourced and unreliable judicial system. This issue has severely impacted the entire country. People of all castes, particularly the poor and the marginalised, suffer from the denial of justice. The numbers of Dalits affected by this are, however, disproportionately higher.

We need to reform and revitalise the political and legal systems to get to the bottom of the dire situation of Dalits and seek appropriate remedies. The government and policymakers must pay more attention to the informal causes of caste violence and other forms of Dalit suffering, namely the religious and the spiritual.

Hidden in plain sight

Nepal’s Dalits suffer from what Columbia University Professor Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak famously called “epistemic violence”. This means that the upper castes control what they know and how they know. Dalit heads have Bahun brains; Dalit eyes have Bahun visions. They are often unable

Mitigating caste violence



POST ILLUSTRATION

to separate the wheat from the chaff.

Let me be more explicit with a typical example of Dalit exclusion in towns. Most Dalits, including politicians and activists, struggle to rent property in places like Kathmandu, Pokhara and Beni because of the landlord’s fear of offending their lineage deities and ancestral spirits. There’s a wide understanding that the family deities and spirits don’t tolerate the breakdown of traditional caste rules, especially intermixing with the low caste.

In reality, Dalit intelligentsia and political class hardly ever mention this widely experienced cause of Dalit suffering. They may express their outrage and even take to the streets when the media covers an incident. Still, they don’t seriously consider targeting the causes rooted in religious and spiritual beliefs.

Most of the time, they dream of and talk about securing a place in the state mechanism. As instructed by their upper-caste political masters, Dalit activists believe that proportional representation and implementation of the modern laws alone would end caste discrimination. They fail to highlight that casteist texts and traditions, rituals and customs amongst Hindus and (to a degree) other faiths have effectively blocked the modern anti-caste laws.

The same epistemological confusion among mainstream Dalits surfaced in our discussion with Dalit activists in Beni on Sunday afternoon. Those deeply involved in party politics argued that religion had little or no influence on perpetuating the exclusion of and violence against Dalits. For them, proportional representation of Dalits in the state, including parliament and government, was paramount.

But the parents and close relatives of the murder victim—who lived in a remote village and were uneducated and inactive in party politics—had no delusions about the role of religious beliefs and practices in the loss of their daughter: Living in a highly segregated community, they suffered various forms of humiliation, exclusion and mental torture based on people’s eagerness to abide by what they saw as the divine authority on caste hierarchy. What was written in the 2006 law against caste discrimination and in the 2015 secular constitution of the country didn’t matter at all in the village life!

A man having an extramarital affair, or even two wives, wasn’t *per se* a new or unacceptable thing in their traditional society in Myagdi. Most intolerable for the high-caste family and the entire village was the involvement of a Damai woman—someone considered ritually polluted. She had to be disposed of not because of her personal shortcomings or behaviour but because her marriage would potentially invite the terrible wrath of lineage deities, village gods and goddesses, so much so that those offended spirits could cause death and destruction in the family, the kinship, and the whole village! It was thus deemed a terrible danger to everybody. Perhaps this danger encouraged the suspected culprit and his family to kill both the woman and her foetus. It was probably considered the safest way forward, given that the woman belonged to a typically poor and outcast family.

Everything I’ve stated here is no new knowledge. However, I worry about the persistent silence around the issue of religious beliefs perpetuating caste hatred. Just because these religious/spiritual causes don’t count in the legal

process doesn’t mean we shouldn’t consider them. If we want to liberate Dalits from oppression in their everyday lives, these common causes shouldn’t be ignored.

Mitigation strategies

It’s time the Nepali parliament and government seriously considered the problem of caste hatred and violence instigated by religious and cultural beliefs—something not exclusive to Hindus anymore. They should support and encourage sociological and anthropological research to examine what’s happening on the ground level and what’s stopping the force of law from influencing people’s lives.

It’s also imperative for the Dalit activists to wake up to the fact that caste hate is not just a political and legal matter; it’s also a religious and cultural issue. No law can be effectively employed until it synchronises with popular customs and beliefs. Dalits must stop believing what their political masters tell them and focus more on religious and spiritual causes. This could be based on their own experiences and observations. It’s well-known that many Dalit ministers and MPs have struggled to rent properties around Singha Durbar.

The entire Dalit community wants to see the murderer of a pregnant Dalit teenager in Myagdi duly punished. Pursuing justice is crucial, and we should all join hands to ensure that the culprits don’t evade jail.

We should be equally mindful that throwing a few criminals in prison hasn’t—will not—*per se* trigger societal change. Dalit lives and properties will be safer only when the deeply ingrained religious and spiritual causes are tackled.

The South China Sea questions

Can a new consensus be explored among the rival claimants to demilitarise the South China Sea?

RAJARAM PANDA



The South China Sea has emerged as a flashpoint as several countries have claims to certain portions of this maritime space. While some Southeast Asian countries make claims to the oceanic space in the South China Sea that falls within their respective Exclusive Economic Zones, China makes a claim on almost its entirety. China’s muscle-flexing behaviour to assert its claims carries the seeds of a potential conflagration. By doing this, China is violating the globally accepted rules-based order and is thus a concern for maintaining regional peace.

China has territorial disputes with a number of Southeast Asian countries, the most prominent of these being with the Philippines. As the Philippines is an alliance partner of the US, American officials throughout 2024 have been privately and publicly signalling to their Chinese counterparts that the North American nation is firmly committed to upholding its alliance commitments. The message is intended as a warning not to test the limits of American tolerance towards Chinese attempts to obstruct access to the Second Thomas Shoal, a submerged reef in the South China Sea where a grounded Philippines vessel, the *Sierra Madre*, serves as an outpost for Filipino soldiers. The disputes stemming over competing claims have been intensifying, thereby raising concerns about an outbreak of war and thus a threat to regional stability.

In response to the escalations, the Philippines, Vietnam and Malaysia have reinforced their presence in the contested waters as the US steps up its intervention. Chinese maritime expert Wu Shicun, who heads the state-funded

National Institute for South China Sea Studies and spent years researching the South China Sea, its history and geography as well as the regional disputes over this strategic waterway, defends China’s claims and blames Philippines for having been the first country to violate Beijing’s rights in the South China Sea in the 1970s, when China was in the grip of the Cultural Revolution. Wu Shicun accuses then President Ferdinand Marcos Sr of sending the military to take over a number of islands, including Feixin (Flat) Island and Zhongye (Thitu) Island.

Wu further observes that Beijing and Taipei did not respond then militarily, allowing Manila in 1971 to gain control of more islands and reefs. Wu rubbishes as erroneous the arbitration by the international arbitral tribunal in The Hague which in July 2016 backed Manila and ruled Beijing’s claims had

possibility of war cannot be ruled out.

For example, when on June 17, 2024, the Chinese coast guard seized firearms from Filipino sailors at Renai Jiao during a confrontation, a trigger could have accidentally been pulled leading to an armed conflict. That the June 17 incident between Chinese and Philippine vessels did not escalate into outright armed conflict is due to some restraint and a whole lot of luck. The world had come dangerously close to a full-scale conflict on the issue of South China Sea but it was averted because of restraint exercised by both sides. As per international law that qualifies for sovereign immunity status, the boarding and seizure of Philippine Navy boats could have been construed as an act of war.

Had the *Sierra Madre*—still a commissioned navy vessel despite being grounded and disused since 1999 been



REUTERS

no basis under international law. It was a landmark victory for the Philippines, which filed the case. The Philippines was forced to approach the Hague court when Beijing closed all options for the dialogue. Beijing has rejected the ruling. Beijing ought to be aware that the Philippines is a US treaty ally and that the latter would intervene in defence of its treaty partner if a war breaks out over the South China Sea. In fact, the

boarded in the heated frenzy, the situation could have easily escalated out of control and potentially triggered the Mutual Defence Treaty between the Philippines and the US. In the end good sense prevailed and a major escalation was prevented. The Mutual Defense Treaty was not invoked in large part because Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr had set the bar pretty high at the Shangri-La

Dialogue in June 2024 where he had mentioned categorically that if any Filipino participants, civilian or otherwise, would have been killed, he would consider that the red line was crossed. While Beijing is unsure what the red lines would be, Manila has assiduously avoided invocation of the treaty in order not to escalate tensions further.

The provocation did not stop with the June 17 incident. The Philippines and China clashed in the disputed waters of the South China Sea on August 25 over what Manila said was a resupply mission for fishermen, the latest in a series of sea and air confrontations in the strategic waterway. The incident overshadowed efforts by both nations to rebuild trust and better manage disputes after months of confrontation. Though the possibility of the US being drawn into a direct conflict could be a certainty, it remains to be seen if Washington would be willing to be engaged in a direct conflict with China for the Philippines, as such a situation could get out of control and would inevitably draw other countries in as well.

A conflict would dramatically impact on regional security and also leave a debilitating effect on the economies of several Asian countries and also on the world economy. If this is the scenario, can a new consensus be explored in which the rival claimants work together to demilitarise the South China Sea? As a code of conduct has remained elusive for considerable time, other agreements may be explored to slowly demilitarise the South China Sea. For example, every claimant could offer an island to develop civilian facilities including scientific stations and environmental research centres to monitor sea levels and restore coral reefs.

Military deployment on those islands and reefs must stop as a first step. And, China ought to be the first to agree to this idea by providing an island for the idea offered. Given China’s behaviour, that could be a difficult proposition. But the idea can be explored in the larger interests of regional security.

*Panda is a former Senior Fellow at Pradhanmantri Memorial Museum and Library, Ministry of Culture, Government of India.*

— The Statesman (India)/ANN



FOREX

US Dollar	134.58
Euro	148.92
Pound Sterling	176.76
Swiss Franc	158.23
Australian Dollar	91.17
Canadian Dollar	99.71
Singapore Dollar	102.93
Japanese Yen (10)	9.17
Chinese Yuan	18.92
Saudi Arab Riyal	35.86
Qatari Riyal	36.92
Thai Bhat	3.93
UAE Dharam	36.64
Malaysian Ringgit	30.90
Korean Won (100)	10.05

Exchange rates fixed by Nepal Rastra Bank

SHARES

Nepse (in percent) 2,823.25pts 4.72%

HIGHEST GAINERS					
NHPC	BFC	SFCL	PROFL	NLG	RLFL
10	10	10	10	10	10
MODERATE GAINERS					
PSF	UNL	PBLD84	NICGF2	NICD83/84	PBD84
0.28	0.25	0.24	0.22	0.1	0.1
MODERATE LOSERS					
MLBBL	SBLD2082	NICAD8182	ANLB	ICFCD83	OZBD86
-0.67	-0.65	-0.39	-0.27	-0.25	-0.11
HIGHEST LOSERS					
LUK	MKHL	NICFC	SFEF	SLBSL	SBFC
-4.71	-3.59	-1.87	-1.81	-1.61	-1.43

BULLION

	Fine Gold	Silver
PRICE PER TOLA	Rs 152,000	Rs 1,775

SOURCE: FENEGOSIDA

BIZLINE

Intrepid DMC Nepal wins sustainability and social responsibility award



**KATHMANDU:** Intrepid DMC Nepal, part of the leading responsible travel company Intrepid Travel, recently won the Grand Title Award at the PATA 2024 Gold Awards held in Bangkok, Thailand, on August 28. The award, presented in the Sustainability and Social Responsibility category, recognised Intrepid Nepal’s impactful campaign, “More Intrepid Women for Nepal”. Intrepid DMC Nepal is one of 29 DMCs within Intrepid Travel. Ashish Verma, country general manager of Intrepid DMC Nepal, says: “Our commitment to sustainability is reflected in every aspect of our operations, from championing climate action and reducing waste to supporting local non-profits that positively impact our communities.” “Our initiative, ‘More Intrepid Women for Nepal’, is breaking barriers and creating opportunities for women in the travel industry,” Verma added. Empowering women is a core component of Intrepid DMC Nepal’s purpose and sustainability goals. “This approach is paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable future within our company and the broader travel industry,” said Verma.

Australian casino firm Star suspended from stock exchange

**SYDNEY:** Troubled resort and casino operator Star Entertainment was temporarily delisted from the Australian Securities Exchange on Monday after failing to post its annual financial results. The measure—which is usually temporary—comes as the firm tries to recover from a series of scandals over lax safeguards against money laundering. The Sydney-based stock market said Star was “suspended from quotation” for “not lodging the relevant periodic report by the due date”. The firm failed to present financial year annual results on August 30. Trading in Star shares was halted on Friday after a regulator said it was still “unsuitable” to hold a casino licence. **(AFP)**

Equity markets mixed as China woes offset US rate hopes

**HONG KONG:** Asian and European markets were mixed Monday, with optimism over an expected US interest rate cut offset by worries over the Chinese economy following the release of more disappointing data. Figures on Friday showed the Federal Reserve’s favoured gauge of inflation—personal consumption expenditures index—fell in line with forecasts in July, setting the bank up to ease monetary policy this month. Focus is now on the release of the closely watched non-farm payrolls report, which will provide the latest snapshot of the world’s top economy. **(AFP)**

# Good weather brought a bumper apple harvest to Gorkha. But there is no transport

Nepalis consume 82,145 tonnes of apples worth Rs8.44 billion annually, mostly imported from China.

**○ HARIRAM UPRETY**  
GORKHA, SEPT 2

Lakpa Gurung of Shardibas, one of the most remote wards of Chumnubri Rural Municipality in Gorkha district, was expecting a bumper apple harvest this year, thanks to the abundant winter snowfall that filled the trees in his orchard with flowers.

Gurung started harvesting apples two weeks ago after they began turning red.

However, he faces a big problem. Transportation in the southern part of Gorkha has become a major issue due to heavy monsoon rains that have severely damaged the roads. Despite the excellent harvest, apple farmers like Gurung are deeply frustrated.

“I have around 400 kg of apples sitting unsold,” said Gurung, who started an apple farm four years ago. “It’s been two weeks, and I still haven’t been able to send them to the market.”

This year, he harvested over 670 kg of apples from 900 trees in his orchard, which started producing apples last year. In the first batch, he harvested 200 kg and distributed them to neighbours and relatives as souvenirs.

“This year, the young apple trees yielded 3 to 4 kg of apples per tree. I managed to sell 200 kg to the hotels along the trekking in Philim and Manasulu by carrying them in bamboo baskets on my back,” he said.

He has another 400 kgs of apples stored at home.

“There are still some apples on the trees,” said Gurung. “If I don’t pluck them soon, they will fall,” Gurung said. “But there is no vehicle to transport apples to the market.”

It takes three hours to reach Philim Bazar on foot.

The track to Larke, which was opened in the winter and allowed jeeps, trucks, and tractors to reach Pangsing Pass, one of the routes connecting the Chinese border in the north, has now been blocked by frequent landslides and mudslides, particularly during the ongoing monsoon season. Lapu is the closest station where vehicles are available, but it is a day-long hike from his farm.

Apple farmers say they have the option of transporting apples on the backs of mules, but there is a big risk



POST PHOTO

Growers say that supplying apples to the market at this time of year fetches a better price.

of damaging the fruits. Gurung, who runs Pati Krishi Tatha Pashupanchhi Farm, sold apples for Rs250 per kg in the village, but there were few customers.

Villagers say that supplying apples to the market at this time of year fetches a better price. Gurung returned to Nepal in 2011 after working as a migrant in Malaysia and started livestock farming and agriculture. He invested Rs5 million in his farm, which has 600 walnut plants.

Commercial apple farming has thrived in areas like Pangsing and Aagasarseu of Shardibas, and in Namrung of Chumnubri Rural Municipality.

However, lack of transportation has left commercial apple growers frustrated, as they face the prospect of losing considerable income this year just before Nepal’s biggest festivals—Dashain and Tihar, which fall in October-November.

There are more than 12,000 apple orchards in Namrung.

Lakpa Thendup Lama, who also

decided to engage in apple farming four years ago in Namrung, is facing a tough year.

“This year, apple yield has doubled, and harvesting has already begun,” Lama said. But, the lack of transportation has dampened his spirits.

“Last year, too, we sold our apples to tourists and hotels in the Manasulu area.” Lama recalled. He had hoped to get a good price for his apples by supplying them to the markets, but has not been able to do so.

He plans to turn the unsold apples into sukuti (dried fruit). He has branded the fruit as ‘Chumnubri Apple’.

It takes around three days to reach Arughat from Namrung.

“Jeeps used to operate in Pangsing, but with the roads in poor condition, they are now empty, and so is our business,” Lama said.

Lama has an apple orchard on 300 ropani (15.26 hectares) .

Two years ago, he exported apples to Kathmandu by helicopter, but it was too costly, he said. “Supplying apples by helicopter is not possible now. It

costs Rs250,000 a trip.” Several varieties of apples, like golden, fuji, and red delicious, are grown in Gorkha. The area is 2,650 metres from sea level, giving a geographical advantage for producing apples.

Ashok Joshi, chief of the agriculture department in the rural municipality, said there has been a rapid increase in commercial apple growers in Chumnubri. “It has been 4-5 years since commercial apple farming started in the region. There are 6-7 commercial growers now.”

“Apple production has increased this year compared to last year.

However, Joshi pointed out that the high cost of transportation and the lack of storage facilities are major concerns, which have dampened the spirits of Nepali growers who aim to reduce imports.

Nepal imported 82,145 tonnes of apples in the last fiscal year, amounting to Rs8.44 billion, mainly from China. The locals said the improved road connectivity could help reduce import of apples.

# Malaysia and New Zealand plan 50 percent increase in trade by 2030

**○ REUTERS**  
KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT 2

Malaysia and New Zealand said on Monday they plan to increase bilateral trade by 50 percent by 2030 and will also review an existing free trade agreement.

The two countries will eliminate non-tariff trade barriers that impede the flow of goods between their borders, New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Luxon said at a joint press conference with Malaysian counterpart Anwar Ibrahim.

“We’re (also) working on e-certification and new customs cooperation to smooth flows at the border,” Luxon said. The countries’ trade ministers will meet

next year to discuss reviewing the Malaysia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement, Luxon said, without providing details on how they would increase trade by 50 percent by 2030.

Luxon also said New Zealand would expand defence cooperation with Malaysia and was deploying one of its air force’s P-8A Poseidon patrol and reconnaissance aircraft to Butterworth in Malaysia’s northern Penang state for a joint exercise.

Anwar and Luxon also called for an immediate ceasefire in the 11-month conflict in Gaza and for a two-state solution between Israel and Palestine to be found. Luxon, who is on a three-day visit to Malaysia, said New Zealand and Malaysia had different positions on the Palestinian militant group Hamas but

were working towards finding a peaceful resolution in the region.

“We both are very united in calling for an immediate ceasefire, getting the parties around the negotiating table and finding a two-state solution,” he said.

Anwar has good relations with the political leadership of Hamas but has said he has no involvement in its military apparatus. New Zealand has designated Hamas as a terrorist entity in its entirety.

Anwar said prospects for a ceasefire did not look encouraging at present, adding there was a lack of commitment from countries, particularly the United States, who could exert their influence to stop the conflict. “The only hope is to engage the United States to take a stronger stance,” Anwar said.

# China’s economic malaise seen accelerating obesity rates

**○ REUTERS**  
HONG KONG/SHANGHAI, SEPT 2

As China builds fewer houses and bridges, its consumers buy cheaper, less-healthy meals, and as factories and farms invest in automation, a new fiscal challenge is emerging: the country’s obesity rate may grow much faster and add to healthcare costs.

Job stress, long work hours and poor diets are growing high-risk factors in the cities, while in rural areas, agriculture work is becoming less physically demanding and inadequate healthcare is leading to poor screening and treatment of weight problems, doctors and academics say.

China is facing a twin challenge that feeds its weight problem: In a modernising economy underpinned by technological innovation, more jobs have become static or desk-bound, while a prolonged slowdown in growth is forcing people to adopt cheaper, unhealthy diets.

With housing and infrastructure already abundant, for instance, millions of workers have switched from construction and manufacturing jobs to driving for ride-sharing or delivery companies in recent years.

In a deflationary environment, consumers prefer cheaper meals, which can be unhealthy. Parents cut down on swimming or other sport classes. China’s fast food market is expected to reach 1.8 trillion yuan (\$253.85 billion) in 2025, from 892 billion yuan in 2017, according to Daxue Consulting.

“Economic downturns often lead to changes in peoples lifestyles,” said Yanzhong Huang, senior fellow for global health at the Council on Foreign Relations. “Dietary habits may

become irregular, and social activities might decrease.”

“These alterations in daily routines can contribute to an increased incidence of obesity, and consequently, diabetes,” he said, adding that he expected obesity rates to continue “rising exponentially, burdening the healthcare system.” In July, Guo Yanhong, a senior official of the National Health Commission (NHC), said that obese and overweight people pose “a major public health issue.”

The NHC did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Xinhua, China’s official news agency reported in the same month that more than half of the country’s adults are obese or overweight, higher than the 37 percent estimate provided by the World Health Organisation.

A study by BMC Public Health estimates that costs with weight-related treatments are expected to rise to 22 percent of the health budget, or 418 billion yuan by 2030, from 8 percent in 2022. The estimate was “conservative” and did not take into account increases in healthcare costs, it said.

That will add further strain on indebted local governments and reduce China’s ability to direct resources to more productive areas to stimulate growth.

China’s NHC and 15 other government departments in July launched public awareness efforts to fight obesity. The campaign, set to last for three years, is built around eight slogans: “lifelong commitment, active monitoring, a balanced diet, physical activity, good sleep, reasonable targets and family action.”

Health guidelines were distributed to primary and secondary schools in July urging regular screening,



REUTERS

A food delivery worker rides past an urban village in Shenzhen’s Futian district, Guangdong province, China, on May 31, 2022.

daily exercise, hiring nutritionists and implementing healthy eating habits—including lowering salt, oil and sugar.

The WHO defines an overweight person as someone with a body mass index (BMI) of 25 or higher, while the BMI threshold for obesity is 30.

Only 8 percent of Chinese are considered obese, higher than neighbour-

ing Japan and South Korea, but far lower than the United States’ 42 percent rate, WHO data show.

That’s in part because it’s a relatively new problem in China, which has experienced widespread famine as recently as the 1960s. “China has undergone an epidemiological transition where diseases associated with under-nutrition have changed to an

# Dollar eases after hitting highest in almost two weeks, US job data looms

**○ REUTERS**  
TOKYO, SEPT 2

The dollar edged down on Monday but remained within striking distance of its highest level in almost two weeks as investors’ focus moved to a US jobs report due at the end of this week.

US payrolls, due on Friday, will be crucial after Federal Reserve chair Jerome Powell pivoted from a battle against inflation to a readiness to protect against job losses.

Analysts say the job figures will determine the magnitude of the Federal Reserve’s expected rate cut. Markets have already priced in for weeks a cut of 25 basis points.

The greenback advanced to its strongest since Aug. 20, buoyed by a rise in long-term Treasury yields to the highest since mid-August as inflation data pointed to a smaller rate cut and gross domestic product figures indicated the economy was on solid enough footing to give the Federal Reserve room to be less aggressive in easing its policy.

Traders currently lay 33 percent odds of a 50-bps Fed rate cut this month, while fully pricing in a quarter-point cut. A week earlier, expectations were 36 percent for the larger reduction. The dollar index measure against six major peers weakened by 0.10 percent to 101.65, after hitting 101.79, a level not seen since August 20. The euro firmed to \$1.1062, after hitting \$1.1043, its lowest since August 19.

A week earlier, expectations were 36 percent for the larger reduction.

On the political front in Europe, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) was on track to become the first far-right party to win a regional election in Germany since World War Two, projections showed, giving it unprecedented power even if other parties are sure to exclude it from office.

“The only clear lessons are that the far-right AfD continues to resist the temptation of power until they get an outright majority,” said Christian Schulz, deputy chief European economist at Citi. Some investors worried that political stalemate in Berlin and also in Paris would prevent Europe from moving ahead with integration initiatives they think are necessary to unleash its growth potential and play a bigger role in global affairs.

Money markets reduced their bets on rate cuts from the European Central Bank as August services inflation remained sticky and ECB policymakers provided no clues about additional monetary easing after a widely expected September rate cut.

They have priced in 59 bps worth of rate cuts by year-end from 67 bps right after the release of German inflation data and from 70 bps in mid-August. A US public holiday on Monday makes for a potentially slow start to the week for the dollar, analysts said, but the following days will see a steady flow of macroeconomic data that culminates with the non-farm payrolls on Friday.

increase of those with unhealthy diets and sedentary lifestyles,” said Christina Meyer, health policy analyst at RTI International in Seattle. As consumers and workers adapt to the structural changes in an economy urbanizing rapidly in the coming decade, many overweight Chinese could cross the obesity threshold, doctors say.







# Gauff joins exit of US Open superstars

The American lost to her compatriot Navarro 6-3, 4-6, 6-3, joining Djokovic and Alcaraz on the US Open scrap-heap.



Coco Gauff's exit means Serena Williams remains the last woman to successfully defend the US Open title, in 2014.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
NEW YORK, SEPT 2

Coco Gauff joined Novak Djokovic and Carlos Alcaraz on the US Open scrap-heap Sunday as the defending champion crashed out to Emma Navarro in a blizzard of mistakes. As Gauff exited, US chances were then rekindled when Frances Tiafoe and Taylor Fritz reached the men's last-eight, igniting hopes of a first homegrown male Grand Slam champion since Andy Roddick's win in New York in 2003. Third-ranked Gauff slumped to a 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 fourth-round defeat to her fellow American on the back of 19 double faults and 60 unforced errors. The 20-year-old's exit means Serena Williams remains the last woman to successfully defend the US Open title, in 2014. "I lost in the first round the last two years and now to be making the quar-

ter-finals is pretty insane," said Navarro, who will face Spain's Paula Badosa for a place in the semi-finals. Gauff's loss was another body blow to the season's final Grand Slam. Djokovic, the defending men's champion, was knocked out in the third round to suffer his earliest exit in 18 years. Fellow crowd-pleaser Alcaraz, the 2022 winner in New York and reigning French Open and Wimbledon champion, was stunned in the second round. "I gave it my all," said Gauff. "Obviously there were things execution-wise, where I was like, I wish I could serve better. I think if I did that, it would have been a different story." China's Zheng Qinwen reached the quarter-finals for a second time with victory over Donna Vekic. Seventh-seed Zheng won 7-6 (7/2), 4-6, 6-2 against her 24th-ranked Croatian opponent who she also defeated in the Paris Olympics final four weeks ago. The powerful 21-year-old is only the second Chinese woman to appear in two quarter-finals in New York after Li Na in 2009 and 2013. Zheng will next face world number two Aryna Sabalenka who defeated her in the last-eight in 2023 as well as in the final of the Australian Open in January. Sabalenka eased into a fourth successive quarter-final with a 6-2, 6-4 win over Belgium's Elise Mertens. Tiafoe joined former champions Andre Agassi, Roddick and Pete Sampras as the only American men to reach at least three US Open quarter-finals since 2000. The 20th-ranked Tiafoe notched a 6-4, 7-6 (7/3), 2-6, 6-3 victory over Alexei Popyrin, who shocked Djokovic in the previous round.

**Zverev in last eight** Dimitrov, the ninth seed, put out Russian sixth seed Andrey Rublev, 6-3, 7-6 (7/3), 1-6, 3-6, 6-3 to return to the quarter-finals for the first time since 2019 when he defeated Federer on the Swiss legend's final appearance in New York. Alexander Zverev, who blew a two-set lead to lose the 2020 final to Dominic Thiem, made his fourth quarter-final by beating Brandon Nakashima of the United States, 3-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-2. Up next is a last-eight clash with 12th seed Fritz who knocked out 2022 runner-up and eighth-ranked Ruud 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, 6-2 to reach his third Grand Slam quarter-final this year. Earlier, New York-born Badosa reached her first US Open quarter-final with a 6-1, 6-2 win over China's Wang Yafan.

# Khawas hat-trick gives Bagmati flying start

Goals from Khawas, Sahara Limbu and Aarati Bhujel help Bagmati defeat Sudurpaschim 5-1 in ANFA Women's League.

SPORTS BUREAU  
KATHMANDU, SEPT 2

Asmita Khawas scored a hat-trick as Bagmati Youth Club started their ANFA Women's League with a 5-1 rout of Sudurpaschim Province at the ANFA Complex in Lalitpur on Monday. Sahara Limbu and Aarati Bhujel were also on target for Bagmati. Tulchha Bohara pulled one back for Sudurpaschim. Sudurpaschim were toothless both in front and back, lacked composure and were disorganised throughout the game. It fully benefited Bagmati, who showed no mercy and slaughtered the opponents every time they found a chance. Sudurpaschim's poor defending was mostly to blame for their disastrous show at Satdobato that gifted Bagmati three of their five goals. Khawas was the first to draw blood in the 17th minute. Bhujel took advantage of a poor defending from Manisha Okheda and supplied Khawas inside the box to slam into the bottom corner. Limbu doubled Bagmati's lead in the 26th minute, thanks to another defending blunder from Sudurpaschim. Sangita BK gave away the possession inside the box to Limbu, who quickly launched a high ball over the clueless goalkeeper Tikesori Saud before finding the net. Bhujel, who assisted Khawas early, then wrote her name in the scoresheet in the 36th minute capitalising on a ridiculous mistake from defender Jharana Thapa Magar, whose thoughtless act of backpassing the ball inside her own area allowed Bhujel to charge a left-footed strike that stung goalie Saud before going in. Sudurpaschim showed improvements after finding them on the back-foot so early, but could not stop Khawas to beautifully execute a counter attack in the 79th minute.



Bagmati Youth Club's Asmita Khawas (9) in action during the ANFA Women's League at the ANFA Complex in Lalitpur on Monday.

Khawas then completed her hat-trick in the 81st minute, scoring a volley past a half-hearted goalkeeper Saud, who did not even choose to make an effort to reach the incoming ball. However, Bagmati's weak defending was exposed out in the open in the 90th minute when Anisha BK's careless approach let Sudurpaschim's Bohara to get the better of Bagmati's three defenders and goalkeeper Karun Budhathoki.

On Sunday, Koshi Province thrashed Waling Municipality 4-0 to kickstart the Women's League, which finally happened after about two and a half years. ANFA had not been able to hold the Women's League since the last edition of the women's league—National Women's League—abruptly ended after the first round in April 2022 citing "various reasons". The first round of the 2022 edition

was held in Chitwan from March 24 to April 13. The Armed Police Force Club were declared the winners—their fifth title—weeks later by virtue of their top position in the eight-team standings. APF will begin their defence of their title against their departmental rivals on Tuesday. Chandrapur Municipality take on Karnali Province in Tuesday's another action.

# Swimmer Kumal finishes 19th at Paris Paralympics

SPORTS BUREAU  
KATHMANDU, SEPT 2

Nepal's para swimmer Bhim Bahadur Kumal exited the Paris Paralympics after he finished last in the men's 50 metres freestyle S9 event of the swimming competition on Monday. A total of 19 para swimmers competed in the men's 50 metres at the Paris La Defence Arena in Paris. Kumal took 35.08 seconds to complete the 50 metres distance to finish sixth in Heat 1. Kumal's personal best in the event is 35.84 seconds, which he achieved during the Asian Para Games in Hangzhou in China. Kumal's competition wrapped up Nepal's participation at the 2024 Paris Paralympics.

Nepal had sent three para athletes to Paris and will return home with a historic medal. Nepal's Palesha Goverdhan won a bronze medal in the women's K44 under 57 kg weight category of the taekwondo competition, becoming the first athlete from Nepal to win a Paralympic medal. Goverdhan defeated Marija Micev of Serbia 15-8 in the bronze medal match. Goverdhan's bronze is also the highest sports honour a Nepali athlete has ever achieved in the world stage. Bharat Singh Mahata, another para taekwondo athlete from Nepal, crashed out on the opening day of the Paralympics after he lost his men's K44 under 58 kg round of 16 match to Mitsuya Tanaka of Japan 3-19.



Nepal's Bhim Bahadur Kumal (second left) with the team after the men's 50 metres freestyle S9 event at the 2024 Paris Paralympics on Monday.

## HOROSCOPE

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19)

Have patience for yourself and others while navigating today's vibes, which may get rough. Manage your own thoughts by working on a healthy mind/body connection and breathing through frustrations as they arise.

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20)

Avoid difficult people during this time, as egos clash more intensely than usual. You'll feel like treating yourself this afternoon, but you should avoid major expenses, as it would be easy to go overboard.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 21)

You may find yourself in sensitive spirits this morning. These vibes will feel exceptionally harsh if you're under-rested, overworked, or need serious nurturing. This energy could also lead to public missteps.

**CANCER** (June 22-July 22)

Big ideas will manifest this morning, putting you in a fanciful state. However, it may be difficult to stay on task when new ideas cloud your view of long-term aspirations. Seek solitude, especially if your thoughts begin to swirl.

**LEO** (July 23-August 22)

Unsettled agreements could hit troubled waters this morning. Stay flexible if structures you'd been counting on suddenly seem less stable, as the universe won't smile fondly upon rigid or stubborn demeanours.

**VIRGO** (August 23-September 22)

You may sense walls emerging between you and your loved ones, but it may be wise to take a step back before charging ahead. Carving out time for yourself can help you find clarity, especially when self-care is embraced.

**LIBRA** (September 23-October 22)

Try not to get hung up on small details today, darling Libra. A desire for perfection could cloud your judgment, leading to error, confusion, or unnecessary stress. Also, beware of anyone who tries to dim your light.

**SCORPIO** (October 23-November 21)

Don't play into any drama that emerges around you this morning. Though others may ruffle your feathers, it won't serve you to intensify the tension. It would also be wise to avoid gossip.

**SAGITTARIUS** (November 22-December 21)

Though frustrations will likely emerge, losing your compassion may lead to emotional damage that's difficult to reverse. Passions flare this afternoon, which could heat your relationships for better or worse.

**CAPRICORN** (December 22-January 19)

Lean into your tactical mind, but don't forget to believe that the universe has your back. When doubt rises to the forefront of your mind, connect with your spirituality to reclaim optimism.

**AQUARIUS** (January 20-February 18)

Acknowledge any debts you owe, bringing strategy into your repayment plans. If you're in a relationship with shared resources, conflict could arise over money, especially if it's mismanaged. Try not to let your ego blind you.

**PISCES** (February 19-March 20)

Don't hesitate to set quick boundaries if others act unfairly or without kindness. Emotions swell this afternoon, though nurturing yourself and your relationships could lead to overwhelming joy.

**CROSSWORD**

**ACROSS**

1 Series of games in tennis

4 Noted fabulist

9 "— 70s Show"

13 Ill-mannered

14 Incline

15 Western tribe

16 Sign of what's to come

17 Stopwatch

18 Move slowly and carefully

19 Vulture

21 Trammel

23 Sign over a door

25 Prov. in Canada

26 City on the Rio Grande

28 Lacked

32 Time per.

33 Cloud in space

36 Rant and —

37 Male deer

39 Flightless bird

40 Musial of baseball

41 "The Greatest Story — Told"

42 Mediterranean island country

45 Begley and Harris

46 Infer

48 Repeat performance

**DOWN**

1 Japanese sport

2 "East of —"

3 Sore to the touch

4 With legs on either side

5 OT priest

6 "— Like It Hot"

7 Candid

8 — non grata

9 Playhouses

10 Frost

11 Altar area

12 Game outcome

13 Fantastic bird

20 Bovines

22 Compass pt.

24 "Spider-Man" actor — Maguire

26 Permission

**PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED**

S	L	A	W	T	R	A	P	S	R	H	O	
T	O	N	O	R	A	D	I	I	P	A	I	R
O	D	O	R	U	N	D	E	R	R	I	L	E
P	E	N	T	A	D	C	E	M	E	N	T	S
K	A	T	Y	D	I	D	S	N	A	P	S	
A	L	A	I	N	S	E	T	S	E	P	I	A
P	O	N	D	G	E	T	U	P	D	I	N	T
P	U	G	E	T	L	A	B	E	L	A	C	E
A	D	O	R	E	A	D	O	R	N	E	D	
S	T	R	I	K	E	S	G	A	S	H	E	D
L	A	I	C	P	O	W	E	R	T	A	B	U
A	M	O	K	I	N	A	N	S	E	T	O	N
M	E	T	D	E	N	S	E	R	E	N	E	

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27 Having land

29 Office gadget

30 Elude

31 Private rooms

32 Storage structure

34 Ref cousin

35 Enticed

38 Loyal (Hyph.)

42 Sure

43 Garment for gymnasts

44 Johnboat

47 Dernier —

49 "Murder on the — Express"

52 Flexible tube

53 President —

54 — Domini

55 Color

57 Wild plum

58 Agents (Hyph.)

59 Costa del —

60 Actress — Ryan

62 Pipe fitting

**SUDOKU**

5	1	4	7	6	3	8	9	2
9	8	3	5	4	2	6	1	7
7	2	6	1	8	9	4	5	3
6	9	1	8	7	5	2	3	4
4	3	7	6	2	1	9	8	5
2	5	8	3	9	4	7	6	1
8	7	5	2	1	6	3	4	9
1	4	2	9	3	8	5	7	6
3	6	9	4	5	7	1	2	8

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

	5		3					1
				7	2			
7	6							5
8	2				9	1		
			1					
		1	8				2	6
3	7						1	8
			7	9				
2					4			3

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

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S	L	A	W	T	R	A	P	S	R	H	O	
T	O	N	O	R	A	D	I	I	P	A	I	R
O	D	O	R	U	N	D	E	R	R	I	L	E
P	E	N	T	A	D	C	E	M	E	N	T	S
K	A	T	Y	D	I	D	S	N	A	P	S	
A	L	A	I	N	S	E	T	S	E	P	I	A
P	O	N	D	G	E	T	U	P	D	I	N	T
P	U	G	E	T	L	A	B	E	L	A	C	E
A	D	O	R	E	A	D	O	R	N	E	D	
S	T	R	I	K	E	S	G	A	S	H	E	D
L	A	I	C	P	O	W	E	R	T	A	B	U
A	M	O	K	I	N	A	N	S	E	T	O	N
M	E	T	D	E	N	S	E	R	E	N	E	

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